

Careers in Flight Crew Operations

What child hasn't dreamed of flying or of becoming an astronaut? Everything that flies, from the astronauts to the airplanes they train in, is handled by Flight Crew Operations.

Our group includes the Astronaut Office, home to NASA's astronaut corps of more than one hundred active astronauts, and a small support staff that handles the day-to-day management of this office.

Although astronauts have probably the most visible job in the U.S. space program, their job includes far more than training and flying in space. These men and women – often with military experience and advanced degrees in fields as diverse as Medicine, Engineering, Geology, and Astronomy – fill many other roles within NASA. Depending on their area of expertise, the astronauts, when they're not training for a specific mission, provide technical support to the space program: from design to assembly; payload planning and in-flight ergonomics; and Space Shuttle launches and landings. They also serve as advocates for assigned spaceflight crews in many panels and mission preparation activities.

Our administrative team supports the astronauts in various ways. Not only do we assist with astronaut selection but we help with astronaut training and with the public appearances they make.

We also manage a fleet of specialty aircraft at nearby Ellington Field. This NASA fleet consists of a wide variety of special-purpose aircraft, including more than 30 T-38 jet aircraft, a Shuttle Training Aircraft, a KC-135 "Weightless Wonder," and the Super Guppy, a giant propeller aircraft that's used to transport large, space-related components. Our office at Ellington Field is made up of specially trained pilots, engineers, and maintenance crews who fly and maintain these one-of-a-kind aircraft and train the astronauts.

Typical degrees Electrical, Aerospace, Mechanical Engineering, and Physical Sciences

For information on becoming an astronaut, visit:

<http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/outreach/jobsinfo/astronaut.html>

The first U.S. astronauts were selected in 1959. Since then, 295 U.S. astronauts and more than 50 explorers from other nations have been trained at the Center.

